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INGERSOLL

AND

INGERSOLLISM

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE TREMONT OPERA HOUSE, GALVESTON, TEXAS,

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BY

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THE LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am before you to-night, not by my own seeking. I am no lecturer; I have neither gifts nor ambition in that direction. It is always with the greatest reluctance that I leave the pulpit for the rostrum, and would not be here to-night but for reasons which have seemed to me imperative. These reasons are very quickly stated. The system to be reviewed is the latest, and fast coming to be the most popular, form of free-thought. It has for its advocate a brilliant speaker; a man of great personal magnetism, and one, too, who has the reputation, at least, of wearing "the white flower of a stainless life." His lectures have been published in a cheap and convenient form, and in this way have drifted all over the land—have drifted into this city. Nearly every book-stall glitters with these many-colored pamphlets; and, in many cases, I am told, they cannot supply the demand. Young men read them; clergymen read them; workingmen read them; and, in many cases, they have succeeded in creating grave doubts in reference to the religion we have believed from our childhood. Young men and workingmen especially, who have not time to read or study elaborate defenses of Christianity, have felt themselves terribly perplexed. If I had the time I could read you a score of letters from these men, asking that some reply be made. I am here to-night at their request, to serve them as best I can, and I am satisfied that every good and earnest man in this audience will say, "God speed."

There are those, however, who will not say this. Col. Ingersoll himself has seen fit to reflect upon all who have presumed to answer him by calling them his "advance agents." This is only an effort to silence replies by a sneer. There is unfortunately much of that spirit in the world. If we ministers are silent upon this question, they cry out, "You cannot reply; the brilliant infidel has spiked your guns;" and when we show them we can reply, lo, we are Mr. Ingersoll's "advance agents," and are mere seekers of "notoriety." Now, for such people I do not speak, and trouble myself very little about their opinion.

When a popular war arises between the reason of any generation, and its theology, it behooves the ministers of religion to enquire, with all humility and godly fear, upon which side the fault lies; whether the theology they expound is all that it should be, or whether the reason of those who impugn it is all that it should be. It is this I shall endeavor to do to-night. In this effort there will be need of your patience. I am your debtor already in this matter; you have borne with me often in the pulpit, and out of it. I shall make to-night, however, a larger draft upon your patience than ever before.

The theme, as announced, is "Ingersoll and Ingersollism"—the man, and his doctrine. Let us look first at the man.

Who and what is Col. R. G. Ingersoll? This is not curiosity. It has much to do with the heart of this question. Upon the man will greatly depend what hearing we give to his teaching. There may be those who will not see the force of this. There may be those who will say, "We care to know nothing of the man; we have only to do with what he teaches; if that commend itself to us we will accept it, no matter who or what the man may be;" and hence, a gentleman said to me, only yesterday, "You have no right to speak of his private character—what force has his life upon the truth or falsehood of what he teaches?" Well, my friends, here is a bit of inconsistency. Why is it that the newspapers are filled with eulogies of Mr. Ingersoll's character? Why do we hear every day upon the streets that he is a man of unblemished record? Why do his friends perpetually ring the changes upon this cry of a "stainless life," unless they do feel that it has something to do with "the truth or falsehood of what he teaches?" If the argument is a false one, they have created it. I do not make an argument in this case, I simply answer one.

But, while I am fully aware that a man's life cannot effect "the truth or falsehood of what he teaches," it still remains true that, when a man sets himself up as a public reformer; when he announces himself as a religious teacher; when he says to men, "Follow me upwards through this path or that, in the light of this creed or that, or no creed, towards the Throne of Light," then we have the right to ask the question, "Who are you that would become our teacher?"

Who, then, and what is Col. R. G. Ingersoll? What do I know of him? Personally, nothing. But this does not matter. There are upon this table before me twenty photo-

graphs of his heart and mind. I am told that the picture upon the outside is not a good one; it is to be hoped, for his sake, that the picture inside is not a good one. That picture is painted, not in colors, but in words—his own words. I want no better picture of any man than his own words. Language is the incarnate expression of the soul's life. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When a man speaks he unmasks himself. Hence here are twenty relentless witnesses, with power to bring his soul from its hiding place to be judged before the bar of this audience. Here are twenty deft-fingered artists who will trace for you, without exaggeration and without reserve, the lines of beauty that grace, or of deformity which mar this invisible spirit.

He has been called *a talented man!* These lectures will sustain that claim. They contain many brilliant passages, which only a man of genius could have written. Let me read you a passage from "Intellectual Development," page 14:

"I do not know what is to be discovered; I do not know what science will do for us. I do know that science did just take a handful of sand and make the telescope, and with it read all the starry leaves of heaven; I know that science took the thunderbolts from the hands of Jupiter, and now the electric spark, freighted with thought and love, flashes under the waves of the sea; I know that science stole a tear from the cheek of unpaid labor, converted it into steam, and created a giant that turns with tireless arms the countless wheels of toil; I know that science broke the chains from human limbs, and gave us instead the forces of nature for our slaves."

In this same lecture occurs a tender little description to which I shall have occasion to refer again. He says:

"When in the winter I go by a house where the curtain is a little bit drawn, and I look in there and see the children poking the fire, and wishing they had as many dollars, or knives, or something else, as there are sparks; when I see the old man smoking and the smoke curling above his head like incense from the alter of domestic peace; the other children reading, or doing something else, and the old lady with her needle and shears—I never pass such a scene that I do not feel a little ache of joy in my heart."

I read one more, from "Skulls," page 15, probably the most striking passage he has written:

"Strike, with hand of fire, oh, weird musician, thy harp, strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies, sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ's keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering mid the vine-clad hills. But know your sweetest strains are discords all compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy! O, rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary line between the beasts and men, and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O, laughter, rosy-lipped daughter of Joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheek to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief."

He has been called a *competent critic of the Scriptures.* These lectures do not sustain that claim; nor did his early training, perhaps, prepare him for so delicate and difficult a task, if we are to believe what is given as an authentic sketch of his life. It is there said: "He was born in western New York, but his father soon moved to Illinois. * * * He soon left home—when he was a mere boy—wandered about the West a good deal, working at different places, and finally got an education as a lawyer."

I do not refer to this to reflect on him as a self-made man. Such men are usually the grandest we have, provided they do not "worship their maker." I simply suggest that he is too dogmatic in his criticism of the Scriptures, and in his disregard of the opinions of the ripest scholars, when we remember that his only claim to scholarship is, that "he left home when a mere boy; wandered about the West a good deal, and finally got an education as a lawyer."

He has been called a *brave and manly teacher.*

I do not think these lectures sustain that claim. I will read you one passage, as a specimen of many you will find here. It is from "Liberty of Man, Woman and Child":

"I saw there the thumb-screw—two little innocent looking pieces of iron, armed on the inside surface with protuberances to prevent their slipping—and when some man denied the efficacy of baptism, or may be he said, 'I do not believe that the whale ever swallowed a man to keep him from drowning,' then they put these pieces of iron upon his thumb, and there was a screw at each end, and then in the name of love and forgiveness they began screwing these pieces of iron together. A great many men, when they commenced, would say, 'I recant.' I expect I would have been one of them; I would have said, 'Now you just stop that; I will admit anything on earth that you want. I will admit there is one god, or a billion; one hell, or a billion; suit yourselves, but stop that.'"

Does he mean in that passage to give us a photograph of his courage as a teacher? Or is he only making game of himself to produce a laugh? In either case, it is a sacrifice of true manliness.

He has been called a *sincere and earnest truth-seeker*. These lectures do not sustain Let me cull from them some of his weapons and methods of warfare:

"An honest god is the noblest work of man."

"Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods are made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally the god market was fairly glutted, and heaven crammed with these phantoms."

"The basest thing recorded of the devil is what he did concerning Job and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their serene highnesses as to the character of 'my servant Job.'"

"And they said, 'suppose that once in a million years a bird would come from some far distant planet, and carry off in its bill a grain of sand, the time would finally come when the last atom composing this earth would be carried away,' and the old preacher said, in order to impress upon the boys the length of time they would have to stay, 'it wouldn't be sun-up in hell yet.'"

"It strikes me that what they call the Atonement is a kind of moral bankruptcy. Under its merciful provisions, man is allowed the privilege of sinning on a credit, and whenever he is guilty of a mean action he says, charge it."

"I thank Mother Nature that she has put ingenuity enough in the breast of a child, when attacked by a brutal parent, to throw up a little breast work in the shape of a lie."

"I am not much given to profanity, but when I am sorely aggravated and vexed in spirit, I declare to you that it is *such* a relief to me, *such* a solace to my troubled soul, and gives me such a heavenly peace, to now and then to allow a word or phrase to escape my lips which can serve me no other earthly purpose, seemingly, than to render emphatic my otherwise mildly expressed ideas. I make this confession parenthetically, and in a whisper, my friends, trusting you will not allow it to go further."

"By these ghosts, by these citizens of the air, by this aristocracy of the clouds the affairs of government were administered; all authority to govern came from them. The emperors, kings and potentates, every one of them had the divine petroleum poured upon their heads, the kerosine of authority."

"I believe in the gospel of this world; I believe in happiness right here; I do not believe in drinking skim milk all my life with the expectation of butter beyond the clouds."

"As you look back upon the record of your life, no matter how many men you have wrecked and ruined, and no matter how many women you have deceived and deserted—all that may be forgiven you; but if you recollect you have laughed at God's book you will see, through the shadows of death, the leering looks of fiends and the forked tongues of devils. Let me show you how it will be. For instance, it is the day of judgment. When the man is called up by the recording secretary, or whoever does the cross-examining, he says to his soul: 'Where are you from?' 'I am from the world.' 'Yes sir. What kind of a man were you?' 'Well, I don't like to talk about myself.' 'But you have to. What kind of a man were you?' 'Well, I was a good fellow; I loved my wife, I loved my children. My home was my heaven; my fireside was my paradise, and to sit there and see the lights and shadows falling on the faces of those I love, that to me was a perpetual joy. I never gave one of them a solitary moment of pain. I don't owe a dollar in the world, and I left enough to pay my funeral expenses and keep the wolf of want from the door of the house I loved. That is the kind of a man I am.' 'Did you belong to any church?' 'I did not. They are too narrow for me. They were always expecting to be happy simply because somebody else was to be damned.' 'Well, did you believe that rib story?' 'What rib story? Do you mean that Adam and Eve business? No, I do not. To tell you the God's truth, that was a little more than I could swallow.' 'To hell with him! Next. Where are you from?' 'I am from the world, too.' 'Do you belong to any church?' 'Yes, sir, and to the Young Men's Christian Association.' 'What is your business?' 'Cashier in a bank.' 'Did you ever run off witn any of the money?' 'I don't like to tell, sir.' 'Well, but you have to.' 'Yes, sir, I did.' 'What kind of a bank did you have?' 'A savings bank.' 'How much did you run off with?' 'One hundred thousand dollars.' 'Did you take anything else along with you?' 'Yes, sir.' 'What?' 'I took my neighbor's wife.' 'Did you have a wife and children of your own?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And you deserted them?' 'Oh, yes; but such was my confidence in God, that I believed he would take care of them.' Have you heard of them since?' 'No, sir.' 'Did you believe that rib story?' 'Ah, bless your soul, yes! I believed all of it, sir; I often used to be sorry that there were not harder stories yet in the Bible, so that I could show what my faith could do.' 'You believed it, did you?' 'Yes, with all my heart.' 'Give him a harp.'"

These passages—every one of them—you will find in his lectures, and I assure you that they are among the mildest. Is this the manner and language of a "sincere and earnest truth-seeker"? I call you to remember that he is speaking upon the most solemn question possible to the human thought. I call you to remember that he is reviewing the oldest and most venerable institution of the country. When you remember its history, all starred with the monuments of a heavenly charity; when you remember how it has stood through the ages, a holy shrine, while pilgrim feet have pressed the path toward it, and the knees of the sainthood of all time have worn the sods around it; when you remember the orphans it has fed, the homeless it has housed, the broken-hearted it has cheered, the deserts it has caused to blossom as the rose; when you remember that its songs and prayers are heard in nearly every American home, and shrined in nearly every American heart; when you remember that its truths are carved in symbol above the graves of our dead, and intertwined forever with our best and dearest memories—I ask you if you think a "sincere and earnest truth-seeker" would deliberately choose mere low, sheer, flippant, indecent, ribald abuse and blasphemy, as his weapon of attack

Here I close this review. In all this I have only sought to know his qualification

s a teacher—as a reformer of men. I have looked at the man through the mirror of his own words. These lectures do not sustain the claim his friends are making, and if they persist in such an argument, it would be well for them to produce something better than these flippant and abusive pamphlets.

I turn now to the second part of this subject—"*Ingersollism.*"

By "Ingersollism," is meant the system of free-thought found in these pamphlets. There is, really, very little which belongs to Mr. Ingersoll, save the poetry and the sneers. Mr. Frank Jervis, a well-known journalist of Chicago, has just proved him to be "The champion plagiarist of the nineteenth century." While he gets his consent to attack a living Christianity, he condescends "to rob dead atheists" for his weapons. He has shown that his favorite aphorism, "An honest god, the noblest work of man," was cribbed from a work published in London, by Charles Blount, in 1663. He has proved that the "Mistakes of Moses" is an almost literal copy of the "Doubts of Infidels," published in London in 1838, by James Watson. His favorite saying that "He would go to hell with his reason, rather than to heaven without," was stolen bodily from the writings of Baron Holbach, a famous French free-thinker of the last century, while, from the "System of Nature" comes two-thirds of his lecture on "Ghosts."

But, to give him credit for what we find here, let us see in what his creed consists. But, to tell you the truth, it is right hard to discover what he does believe. In one place he says "There is no God;" in another "There may be, in immensity, some being, beneath whose wing the universe exists, whose every thought is a glittering star." In one lecture he says "There is no hereafter," in another:

"While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart, nor upon my lips, a sneer for the hopeful, loving and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and over all there is a Being who in some way, will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men."—*Ghosts, page 4.*

In one place he seems not to be attacking religion, but metaphysics. "Let me give you," he says, "my definition of metaphysics, that is to say, the science of the unknown—the science of guessing. Metaphysics is where two fools get together, and each one admits that neither can prove, and both say, 'hence we infer.' That is the science of metaphysics." By the way, that is a very good definition of "Ingersollism," except that in this case, one fool does all the inferring for himself.

As I read further I concluded he was attacking neither metaphysics nor religion, but medicine, He says:

"All the advance that has been made in the science of medicine, has been made by the recklessness of patients. I can recollect when they wouldn't give a man water in a fever—not a drop. Now and then some fellow would get so thirsty he would say: 'Well, I'll die anyway, so I'll drink it'—and thereupon he would drink a gallon of water, and thereupon he would burst into a generous perspiration, and get well; and the next morning when the doctor would come to see him, they would tell him about the man drinking the water, and he would say, 'how much?' 'Well, he swallowed two pitchers full.' 'Is he alive?' 'Yes.' So they would go into the room, and the doctor would feel his pulse and ask him: 'Did you drink two pitchers of water?' 'Yes.' 'Great Heavens, what a constitution you have got.'"

The fact is, he will attack anything if he can only get a hearing or raise a laugh. I understand that a member of the late Democratic Convention held in this city, in a speech made on this rostrum, in response to a call from the Convention, remarked that he was "ready to run for anything, from a glass of whisky up to the governorship of the State." That is Ingersoll exactly, and finely illustrates the spirit of these lectures. He is unscrupulous about what he mixes, provided he can retail it at a dollar a dose. Out of this heterogeneous mass, however, I glean the following:

He denies the existence of God, and holds that they were created by men and will pass away with men.

He denies the inspiration of the Bible, and thinks he could write a better book himself.

He denies the efficacy of prayer, and says that by this time men should know that heaven has no ear to hear, and no arm to save.

He denies the possibility of a miracle, and says no sane man ever thought he performed one.

He denies the existence of hell, and thinks the American people too magnanimous to believe in it.

He denies that Christianity has done anything for the world, and would rather conclude civilization to be the result of "plug hats and suspenders."

His creed, as near as I can get at it, is: "God is a phantom; the soul is a myth; thought is phosporus; humanity is the only religion, and the whole duty of man is to love his wife and children, spend his money like a king, and hate the Democratic party."

These affirmations and denials he sustains by the effete arguments of Colenso, Volney, Paine, Holbach and Parnry, and how he has made such a sensation out of so little, I do not know, unless on the theory of Mr. Jervis, that "the less a bottle has in it the more of a row it makes in pouring it out."

I shall not weary you by going over all this ground. The three leading features of his system are, the denial of the supernatural; the charge against creeds and churches of enslaving men, and his attempt to disprove the inspiration of the Bible. I will speak to these three in order.

1. *He denies the supernatural.* He claims that God is a creation of man; that religion is a fast fading superstition; and that "it is all a question of intellectual development." He then lays a foundation to prove this, and really proves the reverse of his proposition. Let us see if this be not true. In "Skulls," he says:

"I want, in the first place, to lay the foundation to prove that assertion."

"A little while ago I saw models of every thing that man has made. I saw models of all the water-craft, from the rude dug-out, which floated a naked savage—one of our ancestors—a naked savage, with teeth twice as long as his forehead was high, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head—I saw models of all the water-craft of the world, from the dug-out up to a man-of-war, that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas; from that dug-out to the steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York, with a compass like a conscience, crossing three thousand miles of billows without missing a throb or beat of its mighty iron heart from shore to shore"

He saw also musical instruments, from the tomtom, to the organ, from which could soar Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; agricultural implements, from a crooked stick to the latest steam plow; weapons of war, from a club, with which a naked savage crawled out of a hole and hunted a snake for a dinner, up to a Krupp gun, able to throw a ball weighing two thousand pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel. All these he saw, and more; he saw a row of human skulls, from the skull of a savage up to the best skulls of the last generation. He found the same difference in the skulls that he found in the tomtom and the organ, the crooked stick and the plow, the club and the Krupp gun.

"The first and lowest skull in this row was the den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts of mankind, and the last was a temple where dwelt joy, liberty and love."

And so, he said, "It is all a question of intellectual development; man has advanced as he has mingled his thought with his labor."

This is the foundation, but how does this prove his proposition. Why, in this way—that early skull was a "devil factory;" it was a base den in which were born gods and religions and tomtoms and clubs and dug-outs. Religion is no more supernatural in its origin than the club and the tomtom; and as man has out-grown one, so he should out-grow the other "by mingling his thought with his labor."

This might do as a history of the Zeus of the Greeks; the Jupiter of the Romans, or the Isis and Osiris ofthe Egyptians, or the idol gods of Africa, but will any sane man assert that it is a sufficient explanation of the origin of the God of the Hebrews? Who were the Jews? They were, according to Mr. Ingersoll's own statement, a nation without the arts and letters of Egypt, Greece or Rome. They were a nation of slaves, just freed from the bondage of Egypt, and hence are as good representatives as he can produce of "that fellow in the dug-out." Will he tell me how it happens that they were in possession of such an idea as "The Lord God, merciful and gracious?" If, according to his own statement, "Nations create their own gods," and if "no god was ever in advance of the nation who created him," what sort of god should we expect the Israelites to create? We should expect the lowest form of idol worship. On the contrary, what do we find? We find a God who is an omnicient, omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit. A God who commands no image to be made of him, and who gives his name as "I am that I am." A God who gives his people a code of laws, the Ten Commandments, upon which, however man may "mingle his thought with his labor," there has not been a "patentable improvement" in two thousand years. A God of whom it was said "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." But I will not paint him. Behold, upon the canvas of Sacred History, his full-length portrait—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and full of goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;

Is there anything as sublime? And yet, Mr. Ingersoll would have us believe that it was created by a "savage in a dug-out, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head." Did the Jewish nation create this God? No; they never created but one god that I ever heard of, and that was the *golden calf.*

But this is only half the idea. If I may use the figure, the picture of God in the Old Testament is only in the "negative." You have seen a photograph in the "negative?" It may be the face of one you love; you recognize it, but the darkest shades are where the brightest lights should be. Now touch it with the rectifying fluid, and, lo, the lips smile and the eyes flash. Just that did Christ do for what Bulwer has called "The dark shadow of the Hebrew God." He touched it with mingled tears and blood, and, lo, out of the shadows emerged clear and distinct the face of "Our Father, which art in Heaven." That picture—the picture of "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself"—I cannot paint. Go to your mother's heart and take some colors there; go to your happy homes and take some colors there; go wherever "love suffers, and smiles to suffer," and take some colors there; go wherever you can find goodness, wisdom, beauty, love, truth, purity, power, heroism, and gather your colors; then mingle them with the blood drops of Calvary and the tears of Gethsemane, and tremblingly paint your vision, and you have some faint idea of the God who "so loved the world as to give his only begotten son to save it."

And yet Mr. Ingersoll would have us believe that all this was created by a "savage in a dug-out, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head." Do you believe it? *No!* No human being, upon the wings of a daring mind (much less that "savage in the dug-out"), ever swept out over the sea of eternity, and brought flashing from its bosom that priceless gem which makes creation radiant from topmost pinnacle to foundation stone. No man ever brought forth that thought. It stood up first in all its majesty in the ineffable mind of The Eternal himself. "*It was God thinking of himself.*" The effort to grasp this idea is what has lifted that skull from "a den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts," into "a temple where dwells joy, liberty and love;" and the more it learns to apprehend this idea, the nearer it approximates "a palace dome and pinnacle." "God has been getting better," he says, "for two thousand years." So he has, because that skull has been growing better able to apprehend him. For that matter, God will always be "getting better," for his nature is a temple through which an eternity might be spent in journeying, its innermost shrine always unapproachable, yet always flashing with a deeper effulgence of deity.

"That fellow in the dug-out had his ideas about religion, too." Well, what sort of religion would you suppose him to create? Here comes another mystery. The fundamental principles of the Christian religion are as sublime as this grand conception of God and spring directly from it.

A religion which tells man that his highest ideal must ever be that his soul reflects the image of his Creator, and that this image is pure and all-embracing love to God and man; a religion teaching a morality in keeping with such a fundamental demand; a religion teaching the grand doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man; a religion commanding peace, and teaching that aggressive war is a revolt, abhorent to nature, of brothers against brothers; a religion giving to the poor and abject a charter of human rights, saying, "Give to the poor;" "It is more blessed to give than to receive." A religion making the wife the equal of the husband, and not his slave; making her the queen of the household, and saying "Those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." But why enumerate? Its principles are as familiar as household words. You know what it teaches; and you know that to obey it perfectly, a man would be a child of the light and of the truth; a true, tender-hearted brother of his race; a worshiper in all his life, with God in all his thought; a presence and a power of righteousness wherever he moved; a splendid symmetry; a balance of the qualities that make a man—a Christian!

And yet, Mr. Ingersoll would have us suppose that all this was created by a "savage in a dug-out, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head."

No, my friends; if man had created it, man would have out-grown it. But what do we see? Your tomtom has become a grand organ; your club a Krupp gun; your dug-out a Cunard steamer. But of this religion, men declare to-day, despite all "the light of the brain and heart of the nineteenth century," that its principles are absolutely too ideal to reduce to practice. Where did it come from? It came from God, and it has made man what he is. Col. Ingersoll himself, in that degree in which he formulates the "light of the brain and heart of the nineteenth century," is its production. Every

lofty sentiment in his lectures may be retranslated and better expressed in the words of Christ. He talks of generosity, and lashes with satire the man of remorseless greed. But before Col. Ingersoll, there was one who said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away." He talks most eloquently of the queen of the household, and lays a rich tribute at her feet; but, before the dawn of "the light of the brain and heart of the ninteenth century," it was said, "Husbands love your wives." He finds his sweetest music in the laughter of little children, and wants no cruel burdens laid upon their lives; but eighteen centuries ago, there was one who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." But for the influence of this religion upon humanity, Col. Ingersoll himself might be to-day only a barbarian. But for that "light of the brain and heart of the ninteenth century," which Christianity has rendered possible, he might, this very day, be crawling out of a "hole in the ground with a club in his hand, looking for a snake for his dinner."

But, not satisfied that the truth of the supernatural has been sufficiently disproved by his "foundation," he goes further and asks for a miracle. He says, "If there be a God let him control nature, and we will believe him." And is there not a miracle? Did not "the winds and the sea obey him?" The angels who sang at his coming; the star that quivered above his birth-place; the water that blushed into wine at his presence; the devils that fled at his command; the fish that brought him tribute; the waves that crouched at his feet; the storm that hushed into melody at his voice; the rocks that were rent, and the sun that darkened at his death; the king of terrors, through whose grim domain he passed a conqueror; did not all these sign his credentials as "a teacher come God." But these will not do. These are "stale," he says. "Give us a modern miracle," he cries. Very well, listen: "The Gospel is no mere book," said Napoleon, "but a living creature, with a vigor, a power which conquers all that opposes it. The soul, charged with the beauty of the Gospel, is no longer its own; God possesses it entirely; He directs its thoughts and faculties; it is His. What a proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ! * * * * * Men wonder at the conquests of Alexander, but here is a conqueror who draws men to Himself for their highest good; who unites to Himself, incorporates into Himself, not a nation, but the whole human race!"

What is this but controlling nature, even its most difficult district—the human spirit. Is this not a miracle? It is the miracle of miracles. It is the standing miracle of the ages. And who are the men who certify to this miracle? Are they fools or children? No! They are Newton, Locke, Milton, Boyle, Wordsworth, Klopstock, Grotius, Bunyan, Scott, Brown, Hooker, Pascal, Cudworth, Bates, Baxter, Butler, Coleridge, Erasmus, Kepler, Descartes, Bunsen, Babbage, Hamilton, Faraday, Agassiz—christians, all; and thousands, their peers, in this our day. And yet, he stands up and cries, "give us one fact—one little fact." It is a blind man standing in the midst of a world blushing with summer garlands, and crying "show us one little blossom!"

2. I pass next to his pamphlet, "Liberty of Man, Woman and Child." In this lecture he charges Christianity with enslaving men.

A creed is a chain. A church, a place where men cease growing, except to "grow solemnly stupid." The Bible is the source of tyranny—the enemy of liberty.

Now, every man who thinks at all knows this to be untrue. Creeds do not fetter. They are to intellectual liberty, what law is to civil liberty. They protect it. They do not enchain thought, but afford a fixed point from which thought may take wing.* If you repudiate the creeds of Christendom, instead of becoming free, you place yourself in a way to become the slave of any petty intellectual dogmatizer. In such a course you leave the broad highway of Christian thought, for the narrow and morbid speculations of some individual thinker. You abandon yourself to all the petty tyrannies of private thought; to all the formulas of such would-be human masters as Col. Ingersoll.

Again: The Bible is not the enemy, but the friend of liberty. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is the source even of all the political liberty we enjoy. Open this book in the homes of any land, and tyranny in that land becomes impossible. It will unseat any tyrant upon the face of the earth. I do not say it will produce revolution or disloyalty—it is a loyal book. But there is a doctrine here—the doctrine of the rights and worth of each individual human soul—which will make, in any country, the creation of new civil institutions only a question of time. It will result, in every case, in forms

* H. P. Liddon.

of government that recognize the rights and dignity of human nature. We, of this country, owe as much to it, or more, than any nation in the world, and should regard as an enemy of true liberty, any man who openly opposes it.

But, why argue this? What he asks for is not liberty, but license. As I study these sheets I see in them the face of a monster with power to devour all we love. A monster which seem to be the special danger of this century and of this country. It is true the hideous features are carefully hid in garlands, and the effort of a keen sophist is made to hide the fact; but look closely and you cannot be mistaken—it is here. And that monster is communism and universal license. These doctrines can but lead to this. They are doctrines which disregard all oaths, all distinctions of rank or authority, all reverence for the past; which break down all barriers by which the floods of evil are kept out. It is his own language: "I believe in liberty—that is my religion—and I want every human being to have every right I have." Liberty for every man to express what he thinks and do as he pleases. Liberty for weeds as well as flowers; liberty for hawks as well as doves. "Liberty is my religion!" So says every one of them, from Robert Ingersoll through Dennis Kearney to Victoria Woodhull. I say, no! It is time the American people were waking up. There are some thoughts that ought not to see the light. There are some doctrines that ought to polute only the vile brain that gives them birth. There are some evils in our American life that ought to be put down, if it require the dungeon and the halter. "This is a free country!" No, this is not a free country, except to such as deserve their freedom. I believe in moral quarantine. I believe in preserving the purity of American homes, and the permanence of American institutions. I have no patience with the maudlin sentimentality which canonizes a brutal murderer; makes the path of a common criminal an ovation, and weeps tears over the so-called persecution of godless infidels and communists.

3. Next, I take up the "Mistakes of Moses." In this pamphlet occurs the third salient point in his system. He charges Christianity with being founded upon a book, and attempts to overthrow it by showing the mistakes of that book.

Now, I have not the inclination to make, nor have you time to listen to, an answer in detail to this mass of flippant objection and unmanly cavil. I will offer for your consideration seven propositions, which I think you will find to be true, and by means of which the very youngest among you can answer satisfactorily to your own minds this very wonderful pamphlet.

I want to say, however, in the first place, that christians will doubtless cling to this book until he can offer a better. Every earnest man knows that Reason has never been and is not a sufficient guide in these great questions. Every earnest and thinking man knows that some revelation is necessary. We believe this book to be the revelation we need, and will cling to it until we find one more clear, articulate and satisfactory. We shall certainly not set it aside for the book from which most of Mr. Ingersoll's ideas are drawn, "The Life of the Gods," by Eugene Baptiste Parnry, a Frenchman—a book so foul that it had to be suppressed in its own country.

We will now state and apply, in detail, our propositions:

PROPOSITION I. *Much that he states is palpable falsehood.*

I will give you only four instances; you can discover the others at your leisure.

1. He states, on page 8 of this edition, that the Israelites dwelt only *two hundred and fifteen years* in Egypt. His object is to prove that they could not have increased, in that time, from *seventy*, the number entering Egypt, to a nation able to muster, at the close of their bondage, *six hundred thousand fighting men.*

In Exodus chap. xii, 40th v., I read: "Now, the sojourning of the Children of Israel, which they sojourned in Egypt, *was four hundred and thirty years.*"

2. He says of the offerings for the first-born in the wilderness: "Every woman had to have a sacrifice of a couple of doves, a couple of pigeons, and the priests had to eat those pigeons in the most holy place. At that time there were at least three hundred births a day, and the priests had to cook and eat those pigeons in the most holy place; and at that time there were only three priests. Two hundred birds apiece per day! I look upon them as the champion bird-eaters of the world."

This is simply untrue. Every man who has read the book of Leviticus knows that the burnt offering was never eaten, but was "burnt entire." One of those doves was always for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering. This reduces his birds one hundred per day. Now, I go further, and defy him, or any body else, to prove that a

pigeon or dove was ever offered in the wilderness on the occasion of the presentation of the first-born. In this very chapter (Lev. xii : 3) it was stated that these sacrifices were not to be offered until after the rite of circumcision, and we have only to read Josh. V: 5–7, to see that this rite was not practiced in the wilderness. There was no occasion for pigeons until they reached Palestine, and by that time there were priests enough to consume them without becoming "champion bird-eaters."

3. He says, in another place: "The Egyptian standing army at the time of the exodus, was never more than *one hundred thousand men.*" This he says in order to discredit the Mosaic history of the flight of an army of Israelites numbering six hundred thousand fighting men, before "Pharoah and his hosts."

According to Diodorus Siculus, Sesostris or Ramses II, the king during whose reign Moses was born, had an army of 600,000 foot; 24,000 horse, and 27,000 chariots.

4. He says, "Henry VIII took a little time between murdering his wives, *to see* that the Word of God *was translated correctly.*" Every man who has read English history, knows that Tyndale, who translated the bible, was put to death in the reign of Henry VIII, in the year 1536, and that Miles Coverdale, as a piece of good policy, simply dedicated this version to Henry. And this is the "head and front" of the royal wife-murderer's connection with the translation of the Scriptures.

Here I pause. Go through this pamphlet, and you will find a score of instances under this proposition.

PROPOSITION II. *A proper knowledge of the Hebrew will show that many of the so-called "Mistakes of Moses," are the mistakes of a gentleman, who "left home when a mere boy; wandered about the west a good deal and finally got an education as a lawyer."*

1. He says of the Bible: "The gentleman who wrote it begins by telling us that God made the universe out of nothing. This I cannot conceive; it may be so, but I cannot conceive it. Nothing, regarded in the light of raw material, is to my mind, a decided and disastrous failure."

This is not true. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It does not say *how.* Critics are not decided as to whether *bara* and *bereshith* mean creation out of nothing or not. Some theologians teach it, but the Bible does not assert it—it simply says "created." And, suppose it does mean this, how does he disprove it? He says "I cannot comprehend it." Now in the light of an argument, I call that "a decided and disastrous failure."

2. He says of Noah: "God told him to build a boat, and he built one five hundred feet long, eighty or ninety feet broad and fifty-five feet high, with one door shutting on the out-side, and one window twenty-two inches square. If Noah had any hobby in this world it was ventilation."

This is simply ignorance. Dr. Curtiss says: "Genesius understands the Hebrew word Zohar (Gen. vi; 1.), which does not occur elsewhere in the singular, as indicating a system of windows, which according, to DeLitzsch, were to be made at the distance of a cubit below the roof." Who is Dr. Curtiss, you may ask? He is a Leipsig doctor of philosophy—a Berlin licentiate of theology and professor of Old Testament literature in Chicago theological seminary.

3. On page 7 he says: "Then Noah opened the window and got a breath of fresh air, and he let out all the animals; and then Noah took a drink, and God make a bargain with him that He would not drown us any more, and He put a rain-bow in the clouds and said: 'When I see that I will recollect that I have promised not to drown you.' Because if it was not for that He is apt to drown us at any moment. Now can anybody believe that that is the origin of the rainbow?"

No; nor does the Bible assert it. *The passage reads, viz: "And Elohim said, this is the sign of the covenant which I am establishing between me and between you, and between every living creature that is with you, unto everlasting generations. My bow have I set in the cloud, and it shall become a sign of a covenant between me and between the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud upon the earth, and the bow shall appear in the cloud, that I will remember the covenant between me and between you," etc.

Did you ever, in parting from a friend, point to some shining star, and say: "when you behold that, think of me." Just in that way did the Almighty point to the fair arch the sun and rain were weaving in the sky. Did you ever place a simple circle of gold upon the white hand you loved, and say, "Let this be a token of the covenant between

me and thee!" And did you suppose this to *create* the betrothal ring? No more is it meant as the origin of the rain-bow, when we are told that the Almighty made that seven-colored circle the sign and token of his covenant with men.

PROPOSITION III. *The Old Testament uses popular language.*

When it speaks of the sun "rising," of the "windows of heaven" being "opened," etc., it is simply doing what Mr. Ingersoll does, when he talks about the branches of the trees "laughing into blosoms," the grass "running up the shoulders of the hills," and "the sun wooing, with amorous kisses, the waves of the sea, which disappointed, their vaporous sighs changed to tears and fell again as rain."

PROPOSITION. IV. *The Bible is not a book of science.*

It is not a hand-book of geology or astronomy, any more than of conchology. Its main and master theme is moral truth. It does not contradict science; it simply does not teach it. There is a reason for this. The work of conquering the earth and searching for truth is the school which has made man what he is. If the gold had been already coined and fashioned; the marble already quarried; the wheat already changed to bread; the wool already changed to robes; the secrets of nature open to his eye; *geology* and *astronomy already taught*—he might to-day be little better than "a savage in a dug-out, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head." The Bible says enough of geology and astronomy to save him from atheism—that is all. It says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "He made the stars also"—it leaves him to *grow and advance* in the grand work of discovering the "*How*."

PROPOSITION. V. *It is only modest for scientific objectors to wait until they agree among themselves, before they attack the science of Moses.*

Most of the sciences change their leading positions about once every ten years. I respectfully suggest that we wait until they are settled before we give up our theology. Men who sat down gravely and *demonstrated* that it was impossible for a current of electricity to pass from England to America under the sea, and then lived to see three Atlantic cables; men who sat down gravely and *demonstrated* that no vessel could carry coal enough to generate steam sufficient to pass from New York to Liverpool, and then lived to see a Cunard line; men who gravely declared that all life came from a jelly on the sea-bottom, which they called "Bathybius," and lived to see the ship Challenger prove it to be *Gypsum*, ought not, in all modesty, to laugh very loud at the "Mistakes of Moses."

PROPOSITION VI. *The Old Testament, to be properly understood, must be read in connection with the New.*

The New is like the rectifying fluid which brings out into clearness and beauty a picture which was only in the negative. There its principles are worked out and vindicated, We see then that it was only a school-master to bring men to Christ. We see Christ himself endorse it, and our doubts and troubles vanish. He cannot be the author of slavery, who taught the Brotherhood of Man; He cannot be the author of polygamy, who said, "Husbands love your wives;" He cannot be the author of divorce, who said, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder;" He cannot be the author of exterminating wars, who said, "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you"—and the Christ of the New, is the God of the Old Testament. Do you say that, to read the Old Testament, it looks as if these things were true? Do you ask me to explain why it so appears? I say to you frankly, I cannot. There is much in the Old Testament I do not understand. There is mystery there I cannot solve. But that mystery troubles me not, for the Cross is a sufficient answer to it all. It is the anchor of my soul and my reason, as well as of my heart. All fruitless questionings, all peevish repinings, are forever precluded by the passion and death of Christ. For however ill that old world went, or seemed to go, the Cross is the everlasting token that "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten son." This is enough. The mystery will be solved in God's own time. But there are those who will not say this. Because we cannot lift the shadow, Mr. Ingersoll cries out, "I utterly repudiate all creeds, and I deny the truth of all religions." Are you of this mind also? Very well, my only reply is:

PROPOSITION VII. *This method of enquiry is unscientific, and would destroy the truth of all science.*

On condition that it is untrue if it cannot answer all my questions, I can destroy the most exact science in the world. If Prof. Tyndall were upon this stand, I could ask

him more questions in ten minutes than all the scientific men on earth could answer in a century. Let me give you an example. As Mr. Ingersoll is fond of "Shorter Catechisms," I will cast this idea into that form.

NEW SHORTER CATECHISM.

CHAPTER I.

Question.—Prof. Tyndall, what is matter?

Answer.—It is anything which has extension.

Ques.—Prof., What is an atom?

Ans.—An indivisible particle of matter.

Ques.—But, Prof., if it be indivisible, it no longer has extension, and hence is no longer matter, how is that?

Ans.—It is unnecessary for all practical purposes to enquire.

Now, if I were Mr. Ingersoll, to be consistent, I would utterly repudiate atoms, and deny the truth of matter.

CHAPTER II.

Question.—Prof. Tyndall, what makes one substance differ from another?

Answer.—First: Because composed of different elements. Second: Because these elements combine in different proportions.

Ques.—Well, Prof., are not starch and sugar composed of identical elements.

Ans.—They are.

Ques.—And, Prof., do they not combine in the same proportion?

Ans.—They do.

Ques.—Then, Prof., will you please tell me why one is sugar and the other starch?

Ans.—It is due to the grouping of the atoms.

Ques.—And pray, Prof., what is the grouping of the atoms due to?

Ans.—We cannot explain in the present state of science.

And now, if I was Mr. Ingersoll, I would utterly repudiate all starch, and "take no sugar in mine."

But, to be serious, what will you do? Give up science? No! These gentlemen are right. "It is unnecessary for all practicable purposes to enquire." There will always be mystery. And what is mystery? It is merely a fact or law not now known to us. That is all there is of it. Mystery does not belong to the subject-matter of our study, it is simply the limit of our knowledge; it is simply the measure of our ignorance; and, our knowledge being finite, it will always have a limit, and what is beyond that limit will always be a mystery. And, hence, a mystery is an objection to nothing. What, then, shall we do? There is but one course for science and religion—make the best of what you do know.

If in science or religion—quit your abstract thinking, and go to work. If man had declined to make a steam engine until he understood the mystery of heat, he would have been floating in a dug-out yet; if man had declined to make an organ until he solved the mystery of music, he would be playing on a tomtom yet; if man had declined to invent agricultural implements until he understood the mystery of tillage, he would have been plowing with a crooked stick yet; and if man declines to be religious until he understands the mystery of religion, he will presently stand before God with a dwarfed and shriveled soul, fit only to be "cast into outer darkness."

But, my friends, I must detain you no longer. I would not have spoken on this question but for what I deemed an imperative necessity. As it is, I have spoken the best I could. I do not know whether I have removed any doubts, or strengthened your convictions, but I have given what seems to me conclusive.

One thing I want to say in conclusion. My faith does not need these arguments. Infidel theories are for one reason forever impossible to me, and that is this, if they were true, then is life not worth living.

In concluding one of his most radical lectures, Mr. Ingersoll says:

"Let the ghosts go—justice remains. Let them disappear—men, women and children are left. Let the monsters fade away—the world remains, with its hills and seas and plains, with its seasons of smile and frown, its Spring of leaf and bud, its Summer of shade and flower, Its Autumn, with the laden boughs when

"'The withered banners of the corn are still,
And gathered fields are growing strangely wan,
While Death, poetic Death, with hands that color
Whate'er they touch, weaves in the Autumn wood

"The world remains with its Winters and homes and firesides, where grow and bloom the virtues of our race. All these are left. And music, with its sad and thrilling voice, and all there is of art and song and hope, and love and asperations high. All these remain. Let the ghosts go—we will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands, and fade forever from the imaginations of men."

Ah! my friends, we might afford this if life were what he paints it. If life were woven of sunshine, soft shade and blooming flowers; if there were only "homes and firesides where grow and bloom the virtues of our race;" if there were only "music with its sad and thrilling voice," and "art and song and hope and aspiration high;" if there were no death save this poetic change, which sits upon "the withered banners of the corn," and weaves in Autumn woods its "tapestries of gold and brown," then we might afford to say "let the ghosts go," and turn, with deep and measureless content, to our own green, sunny home of earth. But, alas! this is not life! We live in no such poetic dreamland. It is a world where sorrow treads close on the flying feet of joy; where the same air that rings with a laugh, may throb and quiver with a groan; a world where no assembly of people may come together, but there are faces marred by sin and suffering, and brows all silvered with the touch of age; a world where death gathers relentlessly its fearful harvests, careless of that love of life which is the deepest thing of all the feelings of our throbbing hearts. Oh! if this were some sunny Arcadia or fabled El Dorado, where every man might live in that pictured home "with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing and ripening in the Autumn sun," I might say too, "let the ghosts go." But when I remember that it is only the fewest number of our race whose existence is anything better than a struggle for life; when I see that it is only here and there that a man can sit under his own vine and fig tree, and hear the prattle of his children, and enjoy the sweet charities of home and human life; when I see that the vast majority of the race are born to toil, to struggle, to suffer, to weep and die, I see that if the "ghosts" do go, it is a hopeless hell they leave behind them. I say to you again, unless Christianity be true, life is not worth living. Behold it! What is it if its promise be not fulfilled? For God knows it is little else than promise. But oh how divine that promise. Every experience of man is, to me, a white robed prophet, pointing with shining finger to "one far off divine event," for which every throbbing heart has sometime hoped. When I see the body bounding with vigor, and blest with youth, my faith takes wing to a world where man does not grow old. When I see the mind going into all realms, and conquering as it goes, I think of a time, when with the strength and stride of a giant, it shall climb the dim heights of truth. When I see the heart, and listen to its music, it tells me of a time when unheard-of melodies shall tremble from its slumbering chords. "When in winter I pass a house where the curtain is a little bit drawn, and I look in there and see the children poking the fire, and wishing they had as many dollars as there are sparks; when I see the old man smoking, and the smoke curling above his head like incense from the altar of domestic peace; the other children reading or doing something else, and the old lady with her needle and shears—I never pass such a scene that I do not feel a little ache of joy at my heart," for it tells me of a "Home beyond the tide," where the out-flowings of parental affection shall thrill and gladden, and love be love for ever. All these shining rays converge in the far off distance, and "hope sees the shining of a star." Give me that hope, and they are all angels of mercy; destroy it, and they are cruel fiends. No hereafter! Then what is life? It is but a process of dying. My grave is dug. I am hastening to it; and God knows, if there be no future, the sooner I lay my head in its last embrace the better. No hereafter! Then what is thought? A paltry rocket that mounts a short way into the over-hanging night, spangles the heavens for a second, then dies in darkness. No hereafter! Then what is the heart? A silver string which in the act of tuning itself to melody snaps in discord. No hereafter! Then what is love? A fiend which hides in joy-thrills the passage of cruel fingers about the heart, the better to tear it from the bosom. Oh, my friends, given a hereafter, and life is a triumph-march, and death a coronation; but, "let the ghosts go," and life is an organized lie. It is the scowl of a fiend hid beneath the smile of a god. It is a seeming heaven with a cruel hell at its heart.

But, my friends, this is not true. No man shall put that infinite cloud—that infinite shadow over my heart. Life is not all. The Bible is true. God is love. Death is the gate of heaven. This flippant pamphlet is "a messenger of Satan," and in symbol of what he great heart of humanity will do with its message, do I tear it thus, and thus!

London, June 8

Editor Courier Journal,

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find the lecture referred to in my letter of this date. If you find time to glance over it you will see that this item objected to, does, me injustice.

I hope there is no need of bigotry and intolerance in working the papers.

Yours very truly

J. W. Mc

Editor Courier Journal,

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find the lecture referred to in my letter of this date. If you find time to glance over it you will see that the item objected to, does, in reality

I hope there is no harm in bragging and inclosing the proofs.

Yours very truly

G. M. B.

Briggs
Ingersoll &
Ingersollism
B. L. Pierce